

February 23, 2023

General Comments: HB-6659 AN ACT CONCERNING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM
ENDING JUNE 30, 2025, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, members of the Appropriations Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify on the Governor's proposed budget for childcare and public education.

My name is Constanza Segovia and I live in Hartford. I am a parent with kids in Hartford and West Hartford public schools. I'm also an organizer with *Hartford Deportation Defense* and we are here to stand up for Connecticut's kids, especially kids of color in our city public schools. Our organization represents 170+ immigrant families and their neighbors in the Hartford area. We are also members of *Recovery For All*—a statewide coalition bringing together more than 60 community, faith, and labor organizations across Connecticut.

We face a historic opportunity THIS YEAR to fully fund childcare and our pre-K-12 public schools, but the governor's budget does not meet the moment. **Connecticut, as the wealthiest state in the country, should be a state where every child can thrive and learn.**

We love our public school community in Hartford. And it pains me to see the lack of resources I see in our system, and to know that our public magnet school is in a much better position than our local neighborhood schools. We cannot be ok with crumbling school buildings in Connecticut. We cannot be ok with our kids who need the most support not having what they need to thrive. We cannot be ok with the caretakers in our state struggling the way we do — both at home and professionally for those who have chosen to give their life to the education and care of our children.

I urge this Committee to fully fund the ECS formula this year. Our public schools have a severe teacher shortage and staffing shortage. Funding the ECS formula is the bare minimum that public schools need, so that our students can thrive. We need stronger investment in quality public education for all, including our kids with special needs and learning english as a second language. We need professionals in the schools that can support them, and for that we need the ECS formula to be fully funded.

I urge this Committee to keep the charter school formula the way it is. Any changes to the charter school funding formula must include accountability and transparency measures for charter schools. We are all responsible for the quality of education all children in our communities are getting and if charter schools are to operate in our state they must abide by the same accountability and transparency rules as public schools.

I urge the Committee to fully fund Childcare and Early Childhood Education. Care4Kids needs to pay providers more and offer services to more CT families. The state of Connecticut **MUST** make a drastic change in how we invest in the care of the youngest among us. Caretakers are struggling, and we cannot ignore this need. Early Childhood Education is critical both for children and working parents and childcare workers' wages are too low.

Connecticut should be a shining example for the nation—a place where every family has what we need to live a good life. This committee has an opportunity to make that happen by fully funding our children's future and the future of generations to come.

Thank you.

Constanza Segovia
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